

Issue Four / November 2001

Gamefreaks

PLAYSTATION 2

PC

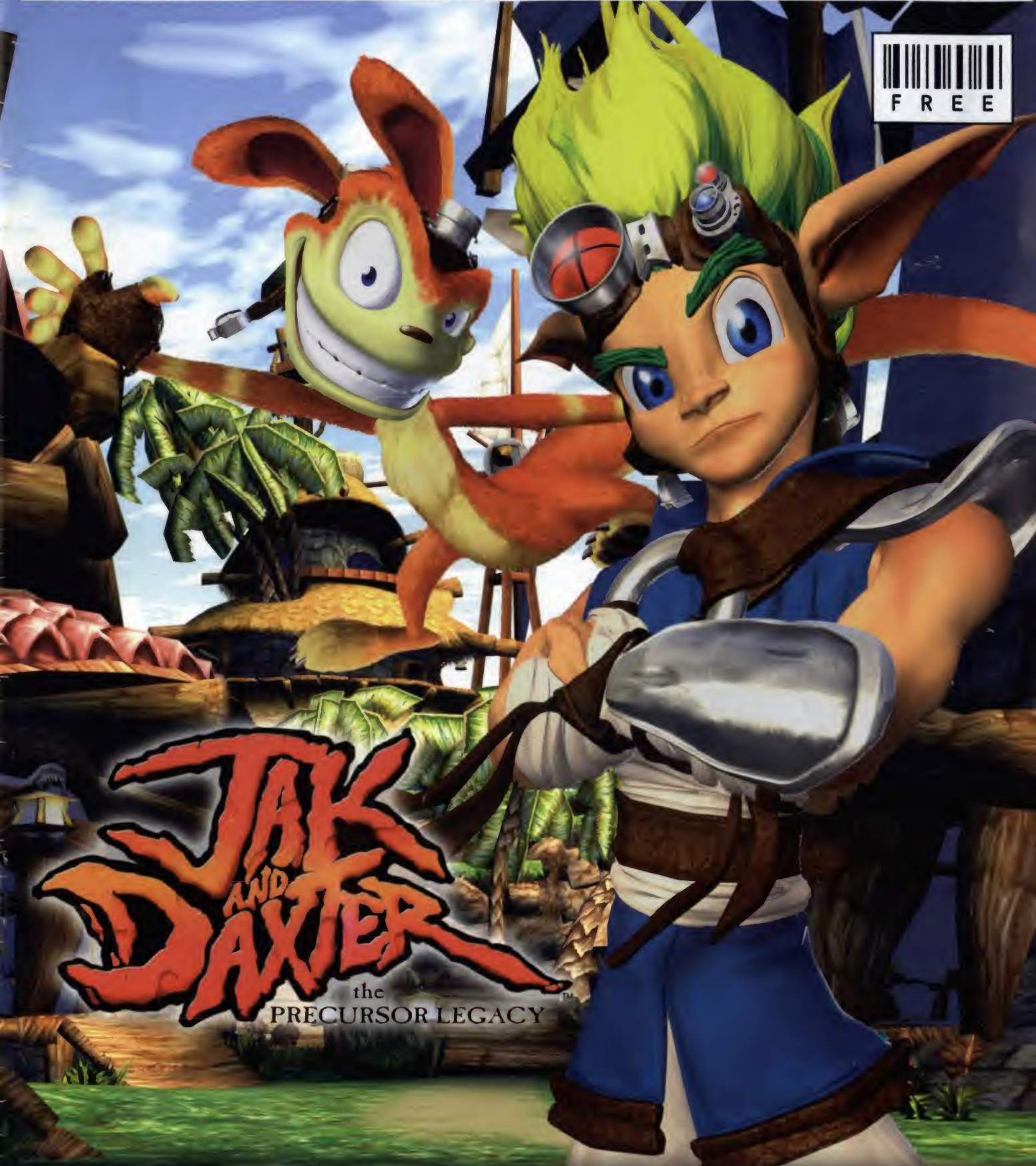
PS ONE

NINTENDO 64

DREAMCAST

GAME BOY ADVANCE

XBOX



JAK AND DAXTER

the
PRECURSOR LEGACY™

FLIGHT SIMULATOR 2002 • HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE • SSX TRICKY •
GRAND THEFT AUTO 3 • WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP • EXTREME G3 • THE ITALIAN JOB •
KLONOA 2 • MECHWARRIOR 4: BLACK KNIGHT • THE SIMS: HOT DATE • ADVANCE WARS

Ace pilots don't settle for cheap thrills.

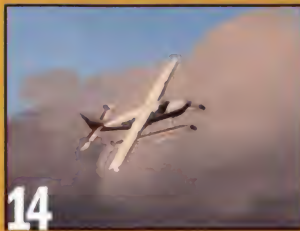
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thank you

Adrian, Alex, Anne, Annie, Barney, Carmel, Carol, Caroline, Chris, Craig, Darren, Dave, Ewan, Iain, Jay, Kasia, Kenny, Lenska, Maria, Mark, Melanie, Michele, Mike, Nimita, Neal, Pam, Paul, Robyn, Steve, Tom, Tony and Wilf. A HUGE thanks to Pip, who was key in getting this mag off the ground, and is stepping aside to have a baby in December - Cher!

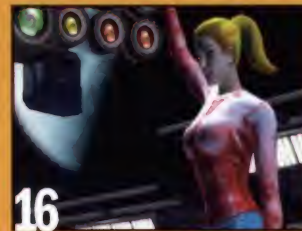
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editorial

"Sweet Mary, what a whopper!" November's Gamefreaks is our biggest yet, which means more games reviewed and more prizes than ever. Local lifestyle magazine Pulp will be featuring some of our reviews from now on - go learn about Pulp at their website www.pulp.co.nz. Also this month we have enlisted the services of Gamer-Net - a local games website run by New Zealand's only "cyber athlete" Neal Thompson, who will provide us with all the latest news in the world of online gaming - check out the site at nzgamer.net.nz.

There are a lot of excellent games in this month - Sony's new PS2 platformer Jak and Daxter is our feature game - it's from the creators of Crash Bandicoot, and promises to be a huge title. The latest in Microsoft's classic Flight Simulator series just flew in, alongside Harry Potter & the Philosopher's Stone, released simultaneously on PS One and PC this month. Sony's superb new rally title World Rally Championship is reviewed, with super sequels Grand Theft Auto 3, SSX Tricky, Extreme G3 and Klonoa 2, making this a great issue for PS2 fans. There are more reviews inside along with international and local news and enough prizes to choke a donkey so go to page 26 to see what you can win.

XBOX XPOSED IN EUROPE

Microsoft announce the European release of the Xbox in lavish style

Around 1000 videogame industry guests, including publishers, journalists and television stations, attended X01 - the event that marked the start of Xbox's European marketing campaign - and to check out some of the games that are in development for the eagerly awaited console.

The audience was treated to impressive visuals and effects leading up to the opening presentation and the long-awaited European release date and price. Xbox will be launched across 16 European countries on March 14, 2002, for an expected retail price of £299 (\$NZ849). The majority of Xbox titles are expected to sell for around £44.99 (\$NZ158).

After initial announcements concerning the console, the presentation went on to cover a huge range of games, both first- and third-party, that are being developed and will be available for the console over the coming year. Around 40 playable games were showcased, with many more being announced for the first time. Games on display included Brute Force, BC, Sega GT 2002, F1 2002, Wreckless, Moto GP, Ghost Recon, Dead or Alive 3, Jet Set Radio Future, Transworld Surfing, Batman Vengeance and Project Ego.

"Xbox will be launched across 16 European countries for £299"

X01 took Microsoft months to plan and was brought to life by the European Xbox team, who wanted to create an experience that reflected the excitement of the console rather than the usual trade show, which they did with amazing success.

And they couldn't have picked a better spot than Maison Bulles (or Bubble House) owned by French designer Pierre Cardin. The surreal building is constructed from a series of bubbles and it's a truly remarkable place. Publishers were allocated their own dome-like rooms to show off their games.

After the official announcements guests were allowed to explore the house and the games, and were treated to a party where DJ Carl Cox spun tunes until dawn. Ultimately the dedicated, creative and ingenious team came up with an environment and atmosphere that was as stylish and fantastic as the content of the games themselves.

Microsoft kicked off its European Xbox marketing drive with style and a huge range of games to keep expectant gamers keen. More details will be released in the run-up to its launch in the US on November 15, 2001 (delayed one week from its previous date to ensure demand can be met). Maybe this type of marketing is something Microsoft would consider for their launch in New Zealand.

Press and other industry types were treated to a night of Xbox previews in surrealistic, not to mention spherical surrounds. The Xbox launch party in Europe was held at Pierre Cardin's famous bubble house



CUBE FANS GOING CRAZY

Would you eat Spam for Nintendo?

What would you do to win a Nintendo Gamecube? Or a Game Boy Advance, or a complete videogame software package and \$US5000 (\$NZ12,195) in cash?

That's what Nintendo is asking gamers across the US as part of their North American marketing blitz in preparation for the Gamecube launch on November 18. Five people have been selected. Their self-chosen tasks include becoming a human Pikmin (which involves shaving your head, painting your entire body and balancing a leaf on your cranium while eating a selection of insects).

But that's just a fraction of what Nintendo is doing to make people aware of the Gamecube. Nintendo Cube Clubs have been bringing the cube to the street since September and will run until release day. Cube Clubs have been set up in vacant warehouses and office buildings to allow people to experience the Gamecube in an environment much more suited to the older generation of gamers that Nintendo wants to attract.

In each club you'll find enough consoles and high-definition TVs to cater for 60 people at a time, plus a DJ and a dancefloor. So far the clubs have been a great success, with the breathtakingly beautiful Star Wars: Rogue Leader garnering the most praise, along with Nintendo's unique fighter Super Smash Bros Melee. With the Xbox launch now scheduled three days earlier than the Gamecube's, the US gaming scene is going to get busy very soon and Nintendo has created a lot of momentum to carry them through to a successful launch.

With fans like 16-year-old Lizzy Joseph of Phoenix, Arizona, who is willing to eat a life-size Gamecube replica made of uncooked Spam, cat food and chocolate syrup to try to win her own Gamecube, a good launch is pretty much guaranteed.



Gamecube clubs are being set up for all over the US. One crazed fan is so desperate for a free console, she has agreed to eat a replica of the Cube made mostly of uncooked Spam - Gamefreaks did some checking and discovered that Spam is tinned meat or a "meat-related" product

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AVAILABLE ON THIS PLANET
NOW!

WINDOWS XP - QUICKER THAN A RAY OF LIGHT

Microsoft's sweet new OS was released last month to rave reviews



and 27% faster than Windows 98 SE.

"Overall, our test results showed that both Windows XP Home Edition and Professional outperformed Windows Me and Windows 2000 Professional in overall system performance, time to perform a system startup, time

and 27% faster than Windows 98 SE. cations and other new features such as Fast User Switching and an enhanced user interface.

Now to the important issues with Windows XP and that is games compatibility. This is definitely the most gruelling test of games I have put Windows XP through with regards to

Windows XP is definitely the best operating system from Microsoft so far. Quick boot time paired with program compatibility and stability - this operating system outperforms all those which have come from Microsoft before it!

XP is here! The most touted operating system from Microsoft has lived up to the hype they have generated. The price may turn a few people away but in our opinion for the extra features and stability it offers the extra cash is worth it. Microsoft have outdone themselves with this operating system and everyone should at least take a passing glance at it.

Windows XP is, on average, 34% faster than Windows 2000

"It delivers on our vision of bringing the most advanced Windows ever to home users, unlocking the true and amazing potential of everyone's PC."

to launch Photoshop 6.0.1, and time to resume to an active state from hibernation or standby modes," says eTesting Labs, a Ziff Davis Media company formerly known as ZD Labs.

Windows XP offers dramatically faster startup and resume times, highly responsive appli-

compatibility. All games came through with flying colours. The games used were Operation Flashpoint, Max Payne, Mech Commander 2, FIFA 2001 and a few more. XP is definitely ready for games. Also older games that did not work on Windows 2000 seem to work in XP.

Bill Gates



HAND ME THE ENVELOPE PLEASE

Local reviewers team up for games awards

There is a small group of people who move about freely in this land unrecognised by the general public yet have opinions which are seen, heard and taken notice of on a daily basis. They are the game reviewers of New Zealand and they hide behind pseudonyms, magazine columns and websites.

A handful of these strange, faceless characters decided it was time to make their mark on the world and they came up with the GRINZ Awards. Taking their name from their organisation, Game Reviewers Incorporated of New Zealand, the awards are quite possibly the only wholly unbiased testimony to a game's excellence in our much loved country. The goal of the award presentations is to acknowledge

the local representatives of the games considered to be the best for the year. The GRINZ judging panel didn't see the point in sending awards overseas to people they have never met and probably never will. They believed it to be more beneficial for the local distributors of the games to bask in the glory as recipients of the awards, knowing they played a key role in the success of the game, and then passing on the good news to their own parent companies overseas.

So we are likely to see a New Zealand game production company receive a GRINZ Award in the not too distant future. The winners will be announced right here in Gamefreaks.



Grand Theft Auto 3 is one of the early favourites around here for "best console game of the year" with the main competition coming from Sony's Gran Turismo 3 and EA's SSX





www.jakanddaxterlegend.com



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AWAY WIN AT EA'S GAMER OF THE YEAR FINALS

EA Sports Gamer of the Year is a competition designed to track down the best sports gamers in New Zealand

This year's finals were held during the recent Sports Expo at Auckland's Greenlane Showgrounds. Gamers from all over the country qualified first at local gaming stores, the best of these going on to the regional finals, held in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. The winner from each region and the top two from Auckland were selected to advance to the national finals, where they were joined by 2 "wildcard" entrants selected over the weekend. Winners were judged according to their performance across a trio of PS2 disciplines, specifically EA Sports favourites SSX Snowboarding, Rugby and FIFA 2001. Wayne Wallace, a 21-year-old from Petone near Wellington, was eventually announced as the Gamer of the Year and took home the trophy and \$10,000 worth of prizes.

"I was really lucky. I already had the three games at home, and had been practising with my brother and mates," says Wallace. "I was really surprised to get to the regionals, and even more surprised to win them. My brother was also selected, so I expected a really tough competition ... he's a skilled player."

The grand prize included a spanking new \$6000 computer and 15 PS2 games of his choice. "The prize is phenomenal. I entered the competition without an email address for the entry form, and now I have a complete computer package," says Wallace.

"I was shaking for ages. I just couldn't believe it! It was really nerve-racking in the playoff between me and the Auckland, because our game was shown up on a large screen television, and I could feel the crowd and the intensity growing around me."

Mike Wynands, general manager of Electronic Arts NZ, hinted that there may be a future for gamers like Wayne. "We are intending to develop this gaming concept internationally," says Wynands. "We have interest from our other Electronic Arts offices in 75 countries worldwide, to identify the best EA Sports gamer on the globe. There may be further opportunities for enthusiasts like Wayne soon."



(top) Wayne Wallace with the winner's trophy (center) All Black Doug Howlett and EA boss Mike Wynands meet future 'EA Gamers of the Year' (bottom) Down in front! - a good crowd gathers to watch the SSX finals



The Kiwi Racing Team (www.kiwiracing.co.nz) has been taking on the whole world in the most demanding on-line Formula One competition on the planet.

This was their first season in this best-of-the-best league and they finished a very respectable 5th overall. Unfortunately the year wasn't all peaches and cream; disaster struck midseason when their number one driver, Matt Pietraszek, had to step down due to work commitments and was forced to hand over his top spot to number two driver, Greg Barber. Greg was subsequently joined by the team's backup and number one test-driver, Marc Engels, who helped to take the team through in the manufacturer's GP3GL World Championship. Greg managed his first podium of the year at the Indianapolis track, just one race before the completion of the 2001 season at Japan's Suzuka circuit. It was a fitting accolade for a hard fight throughout the year and one that the whole team could take pride in. So where do they go from here? Well, already they are redesigning the cars, finalising their sponsors' artwork for the car, website and uniforms and are about to embark on a vigorous testing programme to prepare for the first race in March 2002.



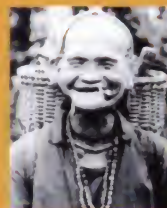
Although still on track for a November release in the US, Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty is now delayed here until next year. GameNation confirmed that Hideo Kojima's long awaited PS2 masterpiece will be out (hopefully) by late February 2002



In a recent press release, Konami revealed that Silent Hill 2, the frightening PlayStation 2 adventure, has sold more than 1,000,000 copies in less than a month. Most of these sales were made in the United States or Japan.



WipeOut Fusion is now being released for the PS2 next year. We have recently played a preview release of the game here at the office and we can tell you that it will be worth the wait



Big smiles all round with a bunch of major PS2 titles on the way before Christmas. Soul Reaver 2, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, Crash Bandicoot and FIFA Soccer 2002 should be on retail store shelves now or very soon, look out for the reviews in a coming issue.



On January 18th 2002 A3 will be bringing New Zealand into the modern gaming arena. With 500 contestants playing for over \$10,000 worth of prizes, this is an event that you do not want to miss. There are only 150 places left so be sure to guarantee yours by going to [Http://www.a3.net.nz](http://www.a3.net.nz)

Gamefreaks has 2 tickets and 2 t-shirts to give away this month, write in and go into the draw!

Harry Potter

AND THE
PHILOSOPHER'S
STONE™



**YOU WILL
HAVE
TO BE
QU
I
C
K
ER**



**THAN
BRETT LEE**



EA-POWERING THE PLAYSTATION





GAMER.NET.NZ

professional gaming network



Gamer.net.nz are an online gaming network, dedicated to providing up-to-date current local and international coverage of E-Sports, Technology and other related developments in the console and pc gaming scenes. Behind the site's sleek design, lies a team of passionate gamers who post news, previews, reviews, articles and interviews concerning the latest developments in their field of gaming interest and expertise. Apart from news, gamer.net.nz also host a buzzing discussion board and chat room (<http://forums.gamer.net.nz/>) where gamers can come to discuss anything and everything related to gaming. Below are a few of this month's feature articles:

CONSOLE

XBOX & PLAYSTATION 2 FEEL THE PAYNE

Max Payne redefined the FPS genre when it was released on PC earlier this year, and it looks set to do the exact same thing again, this time however it's on PlayStation 2 and Xbox. Not much is known about the PlayStation 2 version of Max Payne yet, other than that Rockstar Canada are handling the port, but there's plenty of info and now media concerning the Xbox version, which is under development at Neo and due out not too long after the American Xbox's November release. RockstarGames.com has updated their Max Payne site with ten new screenshots and ten new movies of the Xbox version of the game. You can grab all this media under the Gallery section.

Max Payne headed for
PlayStation 2 and Xbox



Links: www.xbox.com
www.nz.scee.com
www.rockstargames.com

PC GAMES

UNREAL 2 GAMEPLAY UPDATES

The long awaited Epic game, Unreal 2, is due for release early next year, and tension is hotting up on the Unreal.org forums, as Mike Verdu answered some of the public's questions. Among the concerns being raised, was the one of the ASMD Shock Rifle, which the developers have chosen to not include in Unreal 2. However, there is hope yet, as Unreal 2 is set to be one of the best Single Player First-Person Shooter (SPFPS) games of 2002 - The graphics are amazing, and the gameplay is expected to be superb, with around 25 hours of single player play for an experienced gamer.

Unreal 2
In-game screenshot



Links: www.unreal2.com
www.epicgames.com
www.legendent.com
www.infogames.com
www.unreal.org

TECHNOLOGY

RAZER IS BACK IN BUSINESS!

After having had a really rough time trying to find and build a stable business partnership over the past year, together with the help of a small Omaha based company, called Synergy Media Inc., Razer are back in the business they do best - Making championship class mice. Razer mice have been designed from the ground up as the ultimate control device for today's intense computer games. Featuring an ergonomic sci-fi design, innovative features and breakthrough technology, Razer mice give players the competitive edge they demand in the frag fests of today's games. With their incredible feel and amazing performance, the Razer mice are truly a "cut" above the rest.

Razer Boomslang 2000
Official mouse of the CPL



Links: www.razerzone.com
www.karnatechnology.com

E-SPORTS

ALIEN VS PREDATOR 2 TOURNAMENT

On October 26th, the Cyberathlete Professional League (CPL), announced in association with Sierra and Fox Interactive that "Alien vs Predator 2" is now an "Official Tournament Game of the CPL". To get the scoreboards ticking, a 30-city, worldwide tournament is being held. Tens of thousands of gamers around the globe will be competing for one of only 200 seats in the finals, to be held in Dallas, Texas. The winner will drive away in a fully decked out, and highly customised 2002 Ford Focus ZX3, courtesy of American Products Company.

2002 Ford Focus ZX3
Alien vs Predator 2
Tournament 1st Prize



Links: www.thecpl.com
www.sierra.com
www.avp2tourney.com

JAK & DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY

From the creators of Crash comes the biggest PS2 adventure yet!



Platform: PlayStation 2

Publisher: SCEI

Developer: Naughty Dog

Price: \$119.95

Release: 14 December

Sony has managed to establish a great lineup of PS2 titles in just a year. Gran Turismo 3, ATV Off-Road, Time Crisis 2, This is Soccer 2 and Formula One 2001 are among the very best games on the system. And to help celebrate its first birthday in style, Sony is now releasing Jak & Daxter: The Precursor Legacy which could well be their most important PS2 game to date.

According to developers Naughty Dog, Jak & Daxter is the biggest 3D real-time console game ever made. Naughty Dog will be known to many of you as developers of the Crash Bandicoot series that sold over 20-million copies. Company co-founders Jason Rubins and Andy Gavin gave Sony a PSX icon to rival Sega's heroic hedgehog and Nintendo's famous toilet-plunging twins.

Sony boss Steve Dykes gave us his impressions of Naughty Dog's new game and their decision to leave Crash Bandicoot behind. "I've played through just over 50% of the game and can tell you that this is extremely polished, very cleverly designed and extremely hard to put down. Naughty Dog has proven that



The first time we played the game, we swam around to the other side of the island, but don't swim out too deep or you'll encounter an oversized fish that makes Jaws look like a sardine



they are masters of character-based titles and they definitely have the skill and vision to deliver up a new game with all of the magic ingredients that a smash hit requires. Crash is really a PSX character, and was a result of that technology. Naughty Dog has wisely moved on so that they could use the power of the PS2 format to create a totally new experience that is looking forward rather than backwards."

The game gets going with Daxter accidentally being trans-

formed into a thin, cat-like creature. He and Jak must journey to the far north to visit a sage who can restore Daxter to his original form. The early levels are relatively trouble-free. Sentinel Beach and Forbidden Jungle allow you to fine-tune all of Jak's movements with lots of accurate jumping as well as regular fights. Things get a little trickier when you reach Lava Canyon, in which you have to pilot a hovercraft safely over a treacherous landscape crammed with monsters, boiling pits of lava and

numerous other ways to buy the farm. Many of the endearing Naughty Dog touches are still there. The highly colourful, item-packed environments feature lots of lush green grass, palm trees and flaming torches to guide you at night - even the music features those memorable tribal drums that featured so heavily in the Crash series. Collectable items are a fundamental part of any platform title and there is a ton of stuff to hoard in Jak & Daxter. These objects range from the common egg-like Orbs to Green Eco, useful for building health and the more powerful Blue Eco, which lets you move swiftly, break boxes and activate some precursor objects. Certain objects within the game require Eco energy to activate them - floating platforms, for example, won't work unless you charge up with Blue Eco first.

The PS2 offers polygon-pushing power up to 200 times what the original PlayStation was capable of and Naughty Dog's new creation makes full use of it. Trees sway in the breeze, waves gently ripple on the water, even the light changes and shadows shift depending on the time of day. All of this occurring without unnecessary load times. The bulk of the gameplay revolves around exploration but Jak and Daxter is a platform game one minute and a puzzle solving, strategy and racing title the next - all stitched together in seamless fashion. "Jak & Daxter looks absolutely beautiful and it has an awful lot of 'eye-candy', but as we all know, this doesn't necessarily make for a great gaming experience", says Dykes. "Sure, you can wander around and take in the atmosphere, but the game also draws you in with its varied and diverse gameplay"

In Jak and Daxter, you



are free to roam, almost without restrictions at times. The seemingly endless world is an incredibly immersive and totally picture perfect 3D environment, whether you're milling about on the beach, climbing to the tops of hills in search of items or just swimming out to sea at sunrise.



With colourful characters, addictive gameplay and beautiful, cleverly designed levels, Jak & Daxter will be one of the big hits of the summer.

FLIGHT SIMULATOR 2002 PRO

Being a pilot isn't that difficult at all

Platform: PC

Publisher: Microsoft

Developer: Microsoft

Price: Std \$99.00 / Pro \$119.00

Release: Out now



As you can see from these amazing screenshots, Microsoft's Flight Simulator 2002 looks more realistic than ever. If you own a decent joystick, this has got to be one of the best 'simulator' gaming experience available on the PC

Back in 1989 my first Flight Simulator game ran perfectly on my 286, boasting such new features as text air traffic control and 16-bit colour graphics. Now in 2001 we have a much more dynamically evolved Flight Simulator from Microsoft.

The first aspect of the game which really stands out is the way it can be approached by anyone. Initially you watch a couple of movies that show what the game offers. The lessons that follow really start your journey into the art of flying.

The skies in which you will fly through are a lot more crowded than previous MS Flight Sims. You will need the assistance from the friendly Air Traffic Controllers who command this virtual world in the sky. Interaction with the ATC is through key commands and menus and they

respond with verbal instructions. Such interaction may be permission to land, take off or even vectors for instrument approaches.

Detail on the aircraft is very comprehensive with excellent lighting effects. Touches like puffs of smoke when you hit the runway and realistic cloud effects show that this is a true simulator. The opportunity to download the latest weather patterns, accurate to the minute, is proof of that.

With a 3D card you can experience the Virtual Cockpit but the most satisfying view I found was an external view watching my Cessna flying over beautiful looking mountains. You can choose your takeoff position, whether it be Heathrow or the hectic Hong Kong International. Flight presets

range from being an on-demand Cargo Pilot all the way to the big time, a European Airline Pilot.

Flight Simulator 2002 is an excellent improvement over the 2000 version boasting some outstanding new features. So whether you are an experienced pilot or just interested in how an aircraft operates, Flight Simulator 2002 is what you have been waiting for. No matter when you have played a Flight Simulator game the underlying concept is always the same - to enjoy flying around the world secure in the knowledge that the engines will never fail on you.



HARRY POTTER & THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

Read all the books already? Take things a step further and become Harry Potter!

The Harry Potter books are a global phenomenon and it was only a matter of time before we saw a video game. On the PlayStation, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone is a third-person platform adventure game. If it seems strangely familiar, it's because it was built using the Croc engine.

The first surprise is how good the game looks for a PlayStation title. Enormous 3D environments, like the Forbidden Forest, are rich in colour and detail, just as you might picture them from reading the books; there has been a lot of work put into recreating Harry's world.

The game borrows from a variety of different genres. While the heart of the gameplay is fairly standard action, players will love the variety of certain levels such as the roller coaster-like ride at Gringotts Mine or the simulated first-person battle against a troll who has gone berserk, and let's not forget the most exciting feature: the broomstick flying.

The game sticks fairly closely to the plot from the first year's series, and the concept behind the game is simple. It gives gamers of all ages a chance to become Harry Potter in his world. For those who don't know the story, Harry was the product of two mystic parents who were killed by the evil sorcerer Voldemort. Harry then went to live with an abusive, slave-driving aunt and uncle until he was invited to attend one of the top schools for young witches and wizards.

Constructed using the Unreal Tournament engine, the PC version of the game is well detailed with that distinct polished UT look. Executive Producer Chris Graham says,



Platform: PC/PlayStation

Publisher: EA Games

Developer: Volition

Price: \$79.95

Release: Out now



Harry Potter games are springing up all over the place - there is Potter on the PC (top) Potter on the PS One and (right) Potter even on the Game Boy Advance (below)



"We've worked very closely with Warner Bros and we're using a lot of film assets to create really stunning environments capturing the spirit of the fiction. This means the game will, to the best technology can allow, faithfully represent the movie."

Broken down into 25 levels, some of which contain multiple paths, The Sorcerer's Stone will, according to Graham, be "a Harry Potter experience where the player gets to be Harry Potter and do all the things Harry Potter does in the film and the book."



The Harry Potter books have made J.K. Rowling (above) rich and famous all over the world. The new Harry Potter motion picture is expected to be bigger than Titanic and the popular little wizard has games popping up for the PlayStation, PC, Game Boy Color and Game Boy Advance

A woman with long brown hair tied back, wearing a white tank top and grey pants, is sitting in a meditative pose on a wooden floor. She is holding a black handgun with both hands, aiming it upwards. Her eyes are closed, and she has a serene expression. The background is a dimly lit room with large windows showing a cityscape at night.

**DON'T JUST MANAGE STRESS.
BLOW ITS FREAKING HEAD OFF.**

**TIME
CRISIS™ II**

The world's most popular shoot 'em up arcade game comes to the third place. See, you're feeling better already. **namco**

SSX TRICKY

Big air, bigger hair, is SSX Tricky the ultimate PS2 add-on?

Platform: PlayStation 2
Publisher: EA Games
Developer: EA Big
Price: \$129.95
Release: 23 November



SSX Tricky is no trickier than the first game, but it does offer extra tracks and characters. The game visuals have been tweaked as well, just check out these screens!

This isn't an all-out sequel from EA, but rather an appetiser until the full sequel comes out, sometime next year. The changes between SSX and SSX Tricky are all in the lineup of characters and tracks included in the game. There are now 11 characters to choose from, 6 returning from the original and 5 new.

You'll also find 9 tracks are available now, 7 from the first game and 2 brand-new ones - Garibaldi and Alaska.

Garibaldi is a fairly basic circuit-style snowboard course that begins with a scary drop through dense fog that hides the world below. The first time you leap off this ledge, you'll experience some serious anxiety as you simply force yourself to continue.

For anyone who hasn't played SSX, playing SSX Tricky requires the same hand-eye coordination. The games all about big air, far-fetched tricks,



SSX was the big success story for EA on the PS2. SSX Tricky is not SSX 2, more like SSX 1.5 but there is enough changes there to justify wanting it for your collection. Elise (seen above waving) is looking better

and adrenaline-fueled speed. The announcer will remind you during the game "tricks equal boost". Boosting is essentially to not only get ahead of rival boarders, but also to catch huge air off jumps, so you can perform more tricks for more boost. This cycle of boosting, performing tricks and going really fast is the key to SSX Tricky. Graphically, SSX Tricky isn't very different from the first game - it looks like EA might have tweaked things a little and SSX Tricky doesn't have any of the slowdown that the original game had. The character models and animation look a bit cleaner as well, but apart from swanky new costumes and character model amendments, the game

still has the same clean and colourful look.

One area where it's abundantly clear that SSX Tricky has been enhanced is the game's audio. The pre-race 'flyby preview' of each track now comes with an announcer who points out key areas, jumps and features. Also, the characters are a lot more vocal than they were in the original; they now taunt each other and chatter back and forth much more often than they did in the original. SSX Tricky has enough enhancements to satisfy the legions of fans and will perhaps turn a few non-believers as well.



"You work out?" Looks like Elise has gained a few polygons since we last saw her

GRAND THEFT AUTO 3

Public enemy # 1 and loving every minute of it



Platform: PlayStation 2

Publisher: Take 2 Interactive

Developer: Rockstar Games

Price: \$119.95

Release: Out now



The ultra-violent content of the original Grand Theft Auto delighted gamers and critics alike. However parents the world over winced at the thought of li'l Johnny shooting it out with the cops or running over Hare Krishnas in a stolen truck.

There are no Hare Krishnas to flatten in the latest version for the PS2 - we know because we've looked everywhere - and even if there were, the game comes with a MA15+ rating so li'l Johnny is flat out of luck.

The main thing everyone will notice is the vast improvements made to the graphics. The old games were unattractive but Grand Theft Auto 3 is built entirely in beautiful 3D and the results are dramatic.

There are over 80 missions plus a lot of extra work so if you hear a your beeper or a pay-phone ringing, you might want to answer it. You can even pick up a few extra dollars moon-lighting in a cab, ambulance or fire engine.

If you're not familiar with the story, you're a hoodlum looking to impress with your

unique skills. Local crime bosses pay well for a loyal soldier who doesn't ask questions.

Driving around Liberty City takes up most of your time, soon you'll begin to realise that there is a lot of ground to cover. The city is a huge area made up of three districts. Portland, a large industrial sector and home to pimps, vagrants, hookers, bent cops, politicians and general scum. Over the bridge is Staunton Island, the bustling financial hub, and then there is Shoreside Vale, a suburban wasteland, dotted with pretty houses and large, garish mansions that house some of Liberty City's biggest crooks.

There are key buildings around the city and you will eventually familiarise yourself with them. Hospitals provide you with health if you get shot, and you will need to repair and repaint cars from time to time. We haven't stopped playing this game since we got it and we have only just scratched the surface of this game. It has so much depth, so much to offer, that Grand Theft Auto 3 is an instant classic.

(above) Hugh Grant tells a couple of fans to take a hike so he and his new "lady friend" can be alone (top left) Stealing cars has always been the name of the game but the drive by shootings are definitely new



So many cars to steal, so little time. GTA3 is everything we dreamed it would be and much, much more

CRIME PAYS IN GTA3 & CHEATS CAN PROSPER



To activate any of these cheats, enter the codes while playing.

All Weapons:

R2, R2, L1, R2, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up

Full Health:

R2, R2, L1, R1, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up

Lower Wanted Level:

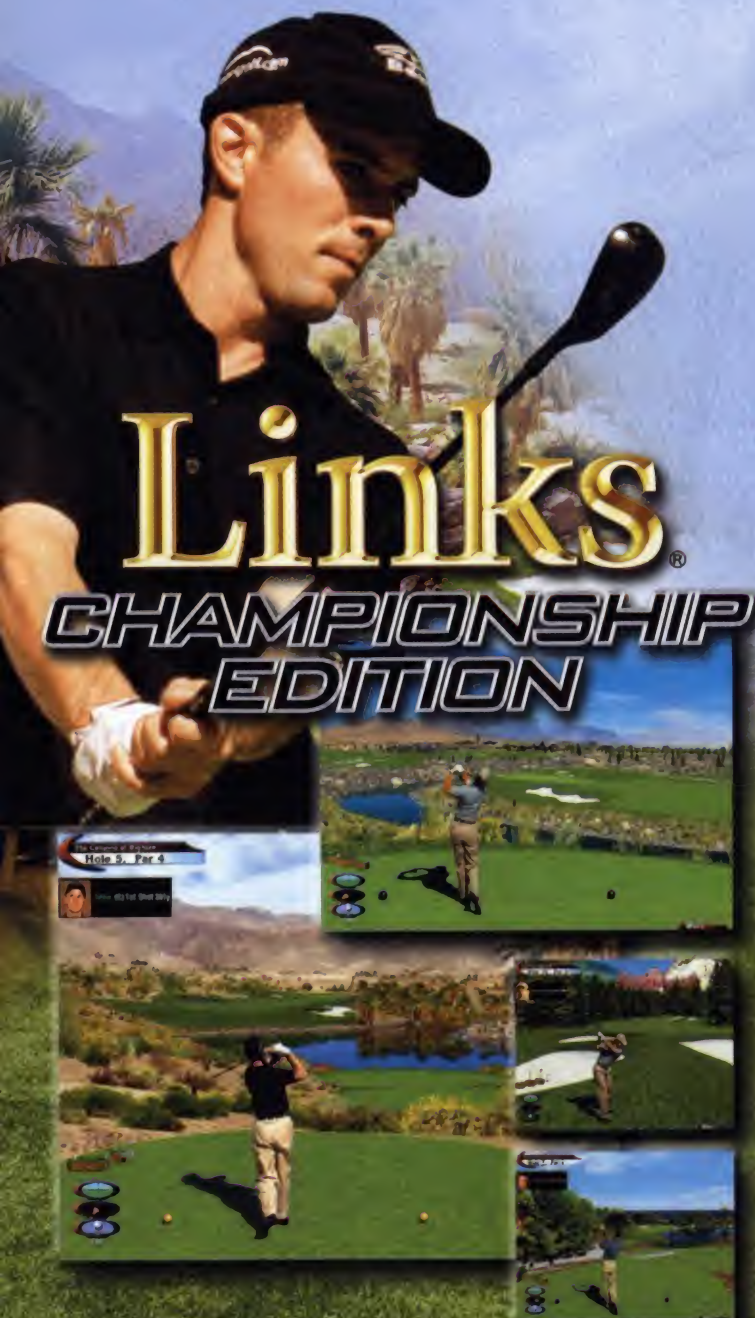
R2, R2, L1, R2, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down

Tank:

Circle, Circle, Circle, Circle, Circle, Circle, R1, L2, L1, Triangle, Circle, Triangle

People fight each other:

Down, Up, Left, Up, X, R1, R2, L2, L1



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AGE of EMPIRES II Gold Edition

Microsoft

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Combining two of the best selling real time strategy games of all time, Age of Empires 2 Gold brings Age of Empires 2 and The Conquerors Expansion together in one great pack. You'll get all 18 civilizations spanning over 1,000 years of history plus 12 new multiplayer maps. Relive historical campaigns featuring the likes of Joan of Arc, Genghis Khan, Attila the Hun, and Montezuma. Conquer opponents over the MSN Gaming Zone, LAN, or modem. Age 2 Gold brings the best of Age of Empires to your computer in one great package!

Age of Empires 2 Gold Edition OUT NOW

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Sony's new rally title leaves Codemasters eating dust

Platform: PlayStation 2

Publisher: SCEI

Developer: Evolution Studios

Price: \$119.95

Release: 28 November



Evolution Studios team of developers have been busy piecing together a brand new rally game, World Rally Championship, for Sony's PS2 console.

WRC has been licensed to carry the official rally championship name and uses real drivers for a more real experience. All the countries from the series are in there and of course that means that we can ravage the very roads that the real rally drivers do when they come to New Zealand.

The New Zealand stages are incredibly similar to the original photos of the actual tracks. The overall graphics will impress and WRC lets you smash up all the cars in the game as much as they fancy, unlike the hugely popular Gran Turismo series where the car manufacturers gave the big thumbs-down to seeing their beloved vehicles being mangled against barriers and coming out looking like a dropped pie on wheels.

However, the idea of the game is to get to the end without incident but that is no easy task. We have the pre-release copy and we know this game is going to give Codemasters' Colin McRae 3 a good run for its money. The visuals are out of this world on the PS2 and WRC handles very realistically as well - it is difficult to see where Colin McRae can improve.

If you were fortunate enough to catch up with the World Rally Championship as it passed through our fine country and felt that it was over too soon, then this game will fill the gap. Not since the original Colin McRae have we been able to rip up our own gravel roads and this time it's on PS2.

The New Zealand stages, like all the stages in WRC, are incredibly similar to the actual tracks (above). As visually striking as GT3, but your car gets dirty and damaged. Make sure you check out all the cool view options



EXTREME G3

Break the sound barrier in WipeOut on wheels

Extrême G3 is the latest installment in a series that began life back in 1997 on the N64. Unjustly labelled a Wipe-out rip-off, it nevertheless went on to build up a loyal following of its own.

Released last month, Extreme G3 places PS2 speed freaks in control of a bike that disregards reality and that's probably the greatest strength of the gameplay - it's not trying to recreate a race we've seen on TV. In fact, it's not sim-like at all. Extreme G3 focuses squarely on sheer, unashamed speed, adrenalin, but more than anything it's just a motherlode of fun. Can we get a hallelujah?

Extreme G3 features several different teams, each with its own selection of riders and bikes. There is a good tradeoff between speed and handling on

the bikes, so choose carefully before you commit to one that you want to spend time upgrading. New and more powerful weaponry is available as well as a multitude of parts for the fully upgradeable bikes, but this costs so save your pennies during the early races.

The 10 tracks are quite lengthy but with the incredible speeds that the bikes travel, they need to be. Also the complex design is nothing short of breathtaking; especially Siris Canyon where players reach staggering speeds on a giant vertical loop. At around 750kph, things go eerily quiet and the visuals blur slightly as you actually exceed the sound barrier. This is one of many thrilling moments during the game and one that you will enjoy time and again.

Platform: PlayStation 2

Publisher: Roadshow

Developer: Acclaim

Price: \$139.95

Released: Out now



Breaking the sound barrier without hitting a steel barrier is a rush. The bikes look a little like those cool bikes out of the film *Tron*. Actually they sound very like the bikes out of *Tron* as well. Why hasn't someone made that entire film into a PS2 game?

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MECHWARRIOR 4 - BLACK KNIGHT

More Mechs, missions and mayhem in this awesome new add on

Platform: PC

Publisher: Microsoft

Developer: FASA Studios

Price: \$69.95

Released: Out now



"And youuuu, you light up my life!" Black Knight has 5 new modes of multiplayer play and all-new campaigns to enjoy, plus a branching mission structure where your performance decides your path to the next mission

From primitive early versions of the game, through to today's very high tech, hi-res combat, the idea of piloting an enormous military exoskeleton has proven irresistible to gamers the world over.

This new expansion lands MechWarrior 4 fans back on Kentares IV, as a member of the illustrious Black Knight Legion. We played the game first with and then without a Sidewinder and its fair to say that keyboard control is by far the tougher option. Experienced MechWarrior players will already know their way around the countless controls but a good joystick will allow even a rookie to move and find your targets with ease. With 5 robust new Mechs (Black Knight, Uller, Sunder, Ryoken and Wolfhound) as well as new vehicles, weaponry and missions, MechWarrior 4: Black Knight offers more than an average add-on. Using the new Black Market feature, you can trade equipment for the 'Tech you need to modify your battle Mach so it becomes even more important to salvage parts from the battlefield.

THE SIMS - HOT DATE

Love life needs a lift? Sims fans can practice daily. No foot pump required!

AThe Sims: Hot Date expansion pack finally lets the gamer tackle a virtual relationship. With the creation of a new area of the city called Downtown, you can pick up a date and show them a good time at a posh restaurant. Or you can chat them up over the music at a nightclub and end the evening at a local bar and if you play your cards right (i.e. not letting them starve to death or die from boredom), you may be in it for the long haul, perhaps even marriage.

You create Downtown and its attractions, building flash restaurants or cheap diners. And the type of buildings you use will affect the cost of your night out. Build too many expensive restaurants and your dates will

empty your wallet faster than you can say "Cheque, please". Hot Date also comes with a barage of new objects that can be used in the regular Sims world, such as trees and lamp posts.

In a slight change, Hot Date only lets you directly control only one player but lets you indirectly influence non-playable characters (NPCs) in the game by inviting them to go shopping or for a dance. But beware, as in real life, dating costs money. And if you are too cheap, you'll be eating dessert on your own. Several new game improvements had to be made to accommodate the need for more complex interaction between the player and other Sims. There are updated brags and greetings with a modified rela-

Platform: PC

Publisher: EA Games

Developer: Maxis

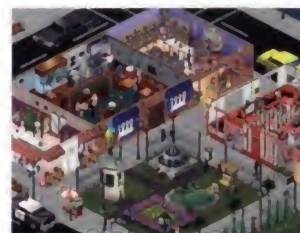
Price: \$59.95

Released: Out now



tionship bar that incorporates long-term relationships. Reading magazines can boost your relationship by building common interests, which keeps your date happy.

This certainly seems to be a major advance in the Sims' complex world and allows for some unique gameplay. But some people might tell you to "Get a real life."



Enjoy a quiet evening watching your Sims have an even quieter one at home on the sofa. This Sim is "in like Flynn" thanks to the timeless stretch-your-arms-then-cop-a-feel method - talk about you clever AI's

KLONOA 2: LUNATEA'S VEIL

Namco bring 2D gaming into the future

Platform: PlayStation 2
Publisher: SCEI
Developer: Namco
Price: \$119.95
Release: Out now



Playing Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil, is like I died and woke up in Japanese gaming heaven. Like Sonic on steroids, Klonoa (a dead ringer for Mickey Mouse wearing boots and a set of angel's wings) follows the straight and narrow track. Sticking to that linear path, the game can move very quickly, featuring simplistic 2-button gameplay that is instantly addictive. Players can collect items, avoid attacks and jump from platform to platform using touch-perfect controls in what is a very good mixture of fast and furious platform gaming and more time-consuming puzzle-solving, with more than a smidgen of Namco's style.

The visuals are typically charming, featuring eye-catching cell-shaded characters against the side-scrolling, pseudo 3D backgrounds. The camera spins and pans with ease, always giving you a great view of the cool level designs.

Classic games like Klonoa 2 are an important reminder of a style of gaming that was once great, and could be great again. As we've seen in the past with Castlevania and the Oddworld series, there's a good deal of potential in 2D graphics and gameplay that has been left thoroughly unexploited. New console technology could do a lot when combined with the principals of classic gameplay, and Klonoa is evidence of that.



SSX Tricky launches you into a world of...

EA-POWERING THE PLAYSTATION

PlayStation 2

SSX Tricky

EA BIG

THE ITALIAN JOB

Hey look, yet another Driver clone!



Platform: PS One

Publisher: GameNation

Developer: SCi

Price: \$59.95

Release: Out now

The Italian Job is based on an old movie of the same name. If you have played either of the Driver games then you will have a pretty good idea of what to expect in terms of visuals and gameplay. Basically, the deal is that you are given a series of driving missions (linked to the movie's plot) that mostly involve trying to get somewhere quickly in your Mini (the car, not the skirt) without being hassled by the cops. The huge maps of London and later on Turin offer plenty of other challenges to keep you busy. You can take a "Free Ride" through the cities for some sightseeing or try your hand at "Challenge" mode. Here you're asked to jump your car over ramps or perform other stunts. The Italian Job isn't a bad title, but it probably should have been out a year ago.

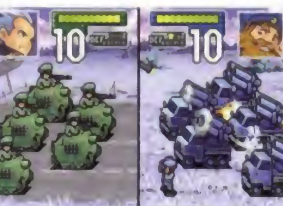
ADVANCE WARS

Thermonuclear war anyone?!

Ready your wallets. If you haven't yet felt like buying a GBA, the power of Nintendo's Advance Wars will compel you to. It's an intense, addictive turn-based strategy game that demands nothing less than constant strategising and forethought.

The game puts you in charge of an army attempting to repel an enemy invasion force led by the oddly named Olaf. There are over 18 different units to command over land, sea and air, each with unique strengths and weaknesses. As well as your units, the Command Officers that act as your in-game self have their own special powers, plus there are environmental obstacles such as terrain and weather.

Not until you can balance your units against each other and fully exploit their and your Command Officer's abilities, while dealing with any unfavourable environmental conditions, will victory be possible. But there's more to it than just taking on Olaf, because Advance Wars features a comprehensive map creator and utilises every multiplayer option the GBA has available, giving the game a near limitless lifespan. From its incredible level of strategy to its classic anime look and its brilliant multiplayer modes, Advance Wars is a near-perfect game that must not be overlooked.



Platform: Game Boy Advance

Publisher: Nintendo

Developer: Intelligent Systems

Price: \$99.95

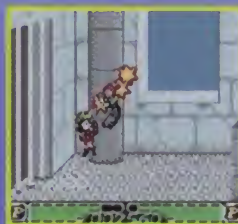
Release: Out December

Nintendo

GAME BOY COLOR



Compete for the title of 'ULTIMATE CHAMPION'!



A wonderfully comical fighting game, only available on the Game Boy Color!



Play one of nine characters from the feature film 'Shrek' and make your fairy tale opponents run, run, run all the way home!



Each of the nine characters has his or her own set of unique moves that makes this tournament no ordinary showdown!



WIN WINDOWS XP PROFESSIONAL



We have scored a brand new copy of Windows XP Pro Edition (cheers Microsoft!) for one lucky reader to win, get cracking and send your entries to go in the draw!

"He is one of the richest men in the world, he's the infamous bespeckled big boss at Microsoft, for a chance to win XP, name that billionaire"

- a) "Bill Gates" b) "Bill Clinton" c) "Bill Hicks"

AIRBLADE & KLONOA 2 UP FOR GRABS



A big thank you to Sony this month for kindly providing us with copies of Airblade and Klonoa 2 (3 copies of each to win!) ...to go in the draw...send us your answer...back on an envelope, you know the drill!

"Everyone knows that Sony make cool games and great consoles but what else do they make?"

- a) "Chocolate"
b) "Televisions"
c) "Chocolate Televisions"



FINAL FANTASY PRIZEPACK

The good people at Columbia TriStar sent us a Final Fantasy pack to give away, complete with DVD (Zone 1), t-shirt, calculator and pen! To be in the draw to win, answer the following question

"Final Fantasy 7 was the first game we saw on the PSX, what is the soon to be released Final Fantasy game on the PS2?"

- a) "Final Fantasy Strikes Back"
b) "I Still Know Your Final Fantasy"
c) "Final Fantasy X"

OVER 15? WIN GRAND THEFT AUTO 3

Take2 have given us a couple of copies of GTA3 to giveaway (tah Adrian). You may only enter if you are 15 or over so BE 15 or over, answer the question and go into the draw

"Which of the following big screen sequels won the best picture Oscar?"

- a) "The Godfather 2"
b) "Scream 3"
c) "I Still Know What You Did Last Summer"



WIN COMMANDOS 2 FOR THE PC

With the war against terrorism dragging on a smidge, ease the tensions with some good old fashioned WWII action care of Gamenation (thanks Alex!) with Commandos 2 (reviewed last month). We have 2 copies of for grabs

"The US seek Osama Bin Ladin for what crime?"

- a) "Speeding, no rego"
b) "He has an overdue Library book"
c) "Masterminding terrorist attacks"



MANGA DVDS



We also have 5 copies of the new BLOOD DVD from Manga, answer the following to go into the prize draw - "Where did Manga art originate?"

- a) "Japan"
b) "Outer space"
c) "Just near Huntly"

HOW TO ENTER

We know you know this by now, but just in case, write your name phone number and postage details clearly on the back of an envelope. Be sure to list the prize you're after and last but not least, you will need to include the correct answer. All correct entries immediately go into the draw to win.

Send all entries to:

Gamefreaks Competition
PO Box 68211
Newton
Auckland

All winners for this month's competitions will be notified before December 5

MECHWARRIOR 4TM

VENGEANCE

BLACK KNIGHT

Expansion Pack

The Day It All Turned Black

As the fog rolls in and the night gets colder, an eerie sound can be heard in the distance. As you wait in your Myrmidon medium tank, you begin to see a figure take shape in the mist, a huge figure...

Expanding on the award-winning MechWarriorTM 4: Vengeance game, Black Knight puts you in control of five all-new 'Mechs and immerses you in a brand-new story line that includes five completely new missions. With new features like the Black Market, dynamic campaigns, and cooperative campaign play, you have more control than ever over your destiny. Black Knight adds an exciting element to the already incredible BattleTech Universe.

More BattleTech Excitement

Five new 'Mechs, six new vehicles, and the new Black Market make this expansion one of the finest.

Expanded Universe

Dynamic campaigns where you decide the next step and a brand-new story line expand upon the award-winning MechWarrior 4: Vengeance.

New Story Line

Play as a mercenary for the Steiner House in the Black Knight Legion. Fight in the new Black Knight 'Mech, one of the biggest and toughest 'Mechs around.

MechWarrior 4 Expansion
DUE LATE OCTOBER

www.microsoft.com/games/mw4_blackknight/



Microsoft

PlayStation 2

GET OFF THE GROUND

airblade

Ride the sky. Bounce off buildings. Don't come down. Not ever.
Next generation boarding. Here in the third place.



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